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SUBJECT: SERBIAN ELECTIONS: SRS, DS TAKE TOP SPOTS

1. (u) SUMMARY: Initial results from the Republic Election Commission (RIK) indicate that the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) again took the top spot in parliamentary elections, with Boris Tadic's Democratic Party (DS) coming in second. ODIHR will likely announce the elections to have been generally free and fair, with some localized irregularities. SEPTTEL will address coalition possibilities and policy impacts. End summary.

2. (u) Embassy observers and OSCE observers spent a full day monitoring Serbian parliamentary elections January 21. By Monday, January 22, the RIK had initial estimates for percentages by party (these estimates track closely with the initial numbers announced by voting assistance NGO CeSID late Sunday night). The results announced were:

Turnout: 60.4 percent, or just over 4 million voters.

Results (126 seats needed to form a government):

Serbian Radical Party (SRS, Tomislav Nikolic): 28.3 percent, 81 seats

Democratic Party (DS, Boris Tadic): 22.7 percent, 65 seats

Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS, Vojislav Kostunica): 16.4 percent, 47 seats

G17 Plus (Mladjan Dinkic): 6.8 percent, 19 seats

Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS, Ivica Dacic): 5.6 percent, 15 seats

Coalition of parties led by Liberal Democratic Party (LDP, Cedomir Jovanovic): 5.3 percent, 15 seats

Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (SVM, a minority party): 3 seats

Coalition of Lists for Sandzak (LZV, Sulejman Ugljanin, a minority party): 1 seat

Two Roma parties won one seat each.

3. (u) Vuk Draskovic's Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) did not cross the threshold. A second Hungarian party and the Coalition of Albanians of the Presevo Valley are on the cusp of crossing the "natural threshold" to gain one seat each in the parliament. These two vote counts, though, will be extremely tight, so no one is willing to proclaim for these two minority parties until every vote is counted and the election is certified official by RIK on Thursday, January 25.

4. (u) ODIHR will announce its initial findings in a press conference at 1300 local time January 22. Based on our own bilateral observation mission and our communication with long-term observers in the field on election day, we expect they will proclaim the elections to have been generally free and fair, with some localized instances of irregularities - probably targeting the Sandzak, where OSCE received reports of some systematic

irregularities in the town of Sijenica (although the supposedly aggrieved parties, the opposition DS and Rasim Ljajic's SDP, told us they did not see any egregious irregularities in the region).

15. (u) SEPTTEL will address timelines, policy ramifications, and likely coalition scenarios for the new government.

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